Amendments to the Drawings

The attached three sheets of drawings include changes to Figures 1-3. Figures 1-3 have been amended to add a "Prior Art" legend to each figure.

Replacement sheets for the amended figures, including Figures 1-4, will be submitted in a separate paper to the Official Draftsperson.

Attachment: Amended Drawing Sheets 1-3/7.
Attached at the end.

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REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the case. Claims 1-13 are allowed. Claims 14, 15 and 17-19 are rejected. Claim 16 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but is allowable if rewritten in independent form. In the present submission, claim 14 has been amended. The specification has been amended to correct typographical errors and to remove references to patent applications which have now been abandoned. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Drawing Objection

The Examiner has objected to Figures 1-3 of the drawings. Figures 1-3 have been amended to include the "Prior Art" legend as required by the Examiner. Applicant submits herewith amended Figures 1-3 with the proposed changes for the Examiner's approval. Replacement sheets for the amended figures, including Figures 1-4, will be submitted in a separate paper to the Official Draftsperson.

§102(b) Rejection

Claims 14 and 15 have been rejected under §102(b) as being anticipated by Yoneyama (JP 04-313949). Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claim 14, as amended, recites:

> 14. A method for generating electrical signals representing an image in a digital image sensor, comprising:
>
> generating digital signals as k-bit pixel data at a plurality of exposure times, said pixel data being associated with each pixel element in a sensor array of pixel elements and corresponding to a level of an analog signal indicative of a light intensity impinging on said pixel element;
>
> providing a data memory for storing an m-bit time index value and said pixel data for each of said pixel elements, said time index value indicating one of said plurality of exposure times in which said pixel data exceeds a predetermined threshold level and for which said pixel data is stored, **said time index value including a t-bit threshold indication** for each of said pixel elements encoded within said m-bit time index value;
>
> determining if said pixel data of a first one of said pixel elements exceeds said predetermined threshold value;
>
> if said pixel data exceeds said predetermined threshold value at exposure times before a last one of said plurality of exposure times, **storing said time index value in m bits** in a

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> location in said data memory associated with said first one of said pixel elements having a first value indicating said exposure time; and **storing the lower r bits of said pixel data in a location in said data memory, where r=k+t-m**; and
>
> if said pixel data does not exceed said predetermined threshold value, **storing said time index value in t bits** in said location in said data memory associated with said first one of said pixel elements having a second value, and **storing k bits of pixel data** in said data memory. (Emphasis added.)

Claim 14, as amended, is patentable over the Yoneyama reference at least by reciting "if said pixel data exceeds said predetermined threshold value at exposure times before a last one of said plurality of exposure times, storing said time index value in m bits in a location in said data memory associated with said first one of said pixel elements having a first value indicating said exposure time; and storing the lower r bits of said pixel data in a location in said data memory, where r=k+t-m." Yoneyama does not teach or suggest storing the "lower r bits" of the pixel data where "r=k+t-m" when the pixel data exceeds the predetermined threshold value at exposure times before a last one of the plural exposure times.

For at least the above reasons, claim 14, as amended, is patentable over the cited reference. Claim 15, dependent upon claim 14, is patentable over the cited reference at least for the same reasons claim 14 is patentable. Withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection of claims 14 and 15 is respectfully requested.

§103(a) Rejection

Claims 17-19 have been rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoneyama in view of Reitmeier et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,560,285). Applicant traverses the rejection.

Claims 17-19, dependent upon claim 14, is patentable over Yoneyama at least for the same reasons claim 14 is patentable. Reitmeier does not cure the deficiency of Yoneyama. Claims 17-19 are therefore patentable over the cited references. Withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 17-19 is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-13 have been allowed.

Claim 16 is objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. For the above reasons, claim 14, the base claim of claim 16, has been amended and is in condition for allowance. Claim 16 is therefore also in condition for allowance.

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CONCLUSION

Claims 1-19 are pending in the present application. Claim 14 has been amended. For at least the reasons stated above, claims 1-19 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner would like to discuss any aspect of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (408) 382-0480.

Certification of Facsimile Transmission

I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on the date shown below.

Signature — January 18, 2005 (Date)

Respectfully submitted,

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